



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
TENNESSEE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
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BILL HASLAM
Governor

RAQUEL HATTER, MSW, Ed.D.
Commissioner

TCDDHH COUNCIL MEETING
Bridges - Nashville
Friday, November 9, 2012

Members Present: Thom Roberts, Lordy Smith (Chair), Dana Hughes, Cherrell Campbell-Street (Assistant Commissioner, Division of Rehabilitation Services), Alan Mealka, Deborah Harris, Michael Friedman, Kate Kanies, and Randy Chappell.

Members Not Present: Margie Ulrich

Call to Order

At approximately 9:08 a.m. the meeting was called to order.

Review of Minutes

The Council members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes from the August meeting to approve of the minutes. Being confirmed, the Council was then asked to approve these minutes. If approved, minutes stand as the official record of the previous meeting on August 10, 2012.

- ✓ Individual Action: Motion made by Dana Hughes and seconded by Randy Chappell for the minutes to stand as the official record of the previous meeting on August 10, 2012.
- ✓ Member Action: The Council voted verbally with all ayes, no nays.
Motion Carried.

Council Member Reports

❖ Dana Hughes –

- As President of the Tennessee Association of the Deaf (TAD) we had our quarterly board meeting two weeks ago in Jackson. Leadership Training will be held on January 26th in Nashville. More information regarding that and the TAD 2013 Conference will be sent out.
- ❖ **Kate Kanies** –
 - I represent the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
 - Christy Leech has been recently hired as the Department's Director for Children and Youth Services.
- ❖ **Randy Chappell** –
 - I am the current President of the Tennessee Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.
 - Our state's new Certification Maintenance Program Administrator is Teresa Gregory from the Knoxville area.
 - Next year's annual meeting will be in Memphis around June 7th or 8th. More information regarding this will be coming out later.
- ❖ **Michael Friedman** –
 - Recently received an e-mail from the Federal Communications Commission regarding Video Relay Service cutbacks. Since I have just received this, I am not prepared to make any comments about this situation at this time.
- **Deborah Harris** –
 - The Memphis/Shelby County District is the only district in the state currently going through a merger (253 schools effected). Memphis City Schools are set to be a part of the Shelby County School System. This is supposed to take place for the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year.
 - In total, there are approximately 300 Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, 6 full-time audiologists (from Colonial Hearing Speech, and Vision Center), 15 full-time interpreters, over 35 teachers of those who are deaf and hard of hearing, over 105 speech/language therapists, as well as several itinerant teachers in the District.
 - 26% of the administrative staff has to be cut. This makes the employees feel uneasy.
 - Dana Hughes asked about hiring teachers with only bachelor degrees and giving five years to obtain a masters degree.
 - Deborah Harris responded by stating that the teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing must be licensed by the State of Tennessee. A master's degree is not a requirement. Without a teaching license, generally they will not be hired to teach students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - Alan Mealka added by stating that the State is requiring those who teach students within the special education program to have an endorsement to pass the test by January 1, 2013. At the Tennessee School for the Deaf (TSD) many teachers must have deaf education and general education certification in one of those areas.
 - Deborah Harris added clarification by stating that Dana Hughes may have been meaning for the speech and language therapists must have a master's degree. If they have a speech/language teacher license, they can work with children but only under the supervision of a teacher with a master's degree.
 - Dana Hughes stated that the district should hire a person who is deaf to be a role model for the students since your district currently does not have a deaf person as a teacher for the deaf education program.
 - Deborah Harris shared the wonderful news that they have endeavored much to recruit those who are deaf and hard of hearing. They indeed hired a person who is deaf to work in White Station Middle School. They also have educational assistants (4) who are deaf
- **Alan Mealka** –
 - There is a lot of activity taking place at the Tennessee School for the Deaf (TSD).

- Construction projects include becoming compliant to fire code and ADA issues, installing an elevator and new restrooms in the gym. A new access road will be created for large vehicles at the back side of the campus to make a safer environment for the students. The most exciting endeavor is to create a new high school building to eliminate the need to access four different buildings (library, vocational shop, and classrooms).
- Annual Pancake and Sausage Breakfast will be on November 21st.
- Viking Basketball Tournament will be held at TSD November 30 – December 1st.
- Statewide Workshop on Deafness tomorrow (11/10/2012) at School for the Blind 8:30 – 3:00. This is aimed at parents and teachers of the deaf. Usually 150-200 attend.
- TSD Football Team named Mason-Dixon Champions in 8-man Deaf School Football.
- Teachers are teaching and students are learning. The goal is 100% job placement for each graduate instead of sitting home and collecting SSI.
 - Dana Hughes asked if Alan Mealka/TSD worked with the students in West Tennessee
 - Alan Mealka replied by stating that West Tennessee School for the Deaf (WTSD) is now under the supervision of TSD. WTSD is a day program; Pre-K through 6th grade and serves approximately 50 students.
 - Dana Hughes stated his concern that there should be a policy of what language should be used in both WTSD and TSD.
 - Alan Mealka responded by stating that whatever language that the student comes in with (SEE, ASL, or whatever) start there and move them forward to teach them English. If children do not master the English language then they're going to struggle in employment and everywhere else.
 - Dana Hughes concluded his remarks to Alan Mealka by stating that it is vital that TSD support the Deaf Community and, in turn, the Deaf Community with support TSD. The Deaf Community can be role models for the deaf students.
- **Lordy Smith (Chair) –**
 - 25th Anniversary Celebration of the Black Deaf Advocates was successful, even though there were not a lot of individuals who attended (40). Guest speakers included Patrice Barner (from the Telecommunication Distribution Access Program) and Dr. Glenn Anderson (University of Arkansas-Little Rock). There was good information, food, door prizes, and dancing.
 - Attended TSD's Homecoming/Reunion in Knoxville. Attended a good drama.
 - Attended the Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) conference in Chattanooga. Great conference with many workshops. Gave kudos to Thom Roberts and Lana Newton for heading this up.
 - At the end of October, Memphis hosted a Marie Griffin workshop which was very interesting.
 - In 2014, there will be a reunion for the students who attended the segregated school for the deaf. Though it will focus on the black students, all are welcomed to attend. The event will honor those who went up to the eighth grade so many years ago.

Executive Director's Report

- Gave thanks to the DeafConnect of the Mid-South for providing the wonderful breakfast.

August

24 Submitted the TCDHH Annual Report to the General Assembly

September

- 28 Attended Linda Lawson's Retirement Reception at Partnership Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services in Chattanooga.

October

- 15-19 Roberts Chaired the Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness 2012 conference in Chattanooga. During the week, SERID had two pre-conference workshops, caucus meetings, three plenary sessions, over thirty five workshops, and approximately 325 in attendance. Next year it is going to be hosted in Orlando, Florida.

Other activities include, but not limited to, providing assistance in obtaining hearing aids, providing advocacy, and serving on the Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) Board of Directors. Roberts also had various discussions with the Division of Rehabilitation Services regarding funding options for TCDHH in order to fulfill the original mission of the council. He also has been pack up his office in spare time in order to prepare for the move from 14th floor to the 10th floor of Citizen's Plaza Building. It is hoped that this new location will be only for 6 months until the council can be relocated to a renovated floor.

- Randy Chappell – Concerned that the funding would be cut to the council to run as it has been running. According to the Tennessee Code Annotated, there is supposed to be a TCDHH. What is the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) response to that?
- Thom Roberts – DRS uses state dollars to match with money from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to draw down all the money to run all the programs under DRS. TCDHH is one of those programs. Because of this, RSA requires those who receive their funding to provide services and goods connected to Vocational Rehabilitation programs only. TCDHH does not do this and, thus, DRS cannot continue to fund TCDHH. Several ideas and suggestions have been given to Assistant Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street on other sources of funding to keep the council how it is intended to be. Other states have councils such as ours but they are funded by pure state dollars.
- Discussion ensued regarding funding. Randy Chappell, Dana Hughes, and Thom Roberts were clarifying the current situation and how resolve it to be able to proceed. Randy Chappell did thank Thom Roberts for all he has done to keep the council "alive" and apologized for the many questions that were aimed at him.
- Since the Assistant Commissioner was not present thus far in the meeting, Thom Roberts e-mailed her regarding the questions of funding to see if she could be in attendance to speak from the Division's point of view.

Center Director Reports

➤ **JCIL – Beth James**

- The extended three month contract (\$37,500 July-September 2012) had 13 goals that we exceeded during this period of time.
- In August there was a lot of outreach that took place.
 - One hour radio show about deaf awareness.
 - Grassroots effort is needed to look for funding to serve all 22 counties in the region. JCIL has already lost Amy Cone (former

center director for deaf and hard of hearing services).

Approached local state representatives and local state senator.

➤ **CCDHH – Jessica Harrison -**

- 14.25 hours of community service
- 6.25 hours of free interpreting service
 - Financial Issues
 - Legal Issues
 - Housing Issues
 - Medical Issues
 - Mental Health Services
 - Telecommunication Devices
 - Other such needs
- Collaborative effort with VR and employer to make their workplace accessible for the three employees who are deaf.
- Deaf Awareness at pre-school teaching them a few signs.
- Becky Allen (Disability Law and Advocacy Center) met with the Deaf Community at CCDHH
- Worked with the Johnson City Police Department/Records Division to explain the ADA and how it applies to them.
- Give out weekly business listing to help those seeking employment.
- Radio Talk Show regarding hiring deaf as great employees
- Some CCDHH employees attended the SERID Conference.
- Newspaper article and Frontier Health, Inc newsletter article on “deafness” and sign language.
- Northeast Tennessee Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf chapter is still active in Johnson City
- Jessica Harrison achieved her Certificate of Interpretation from RID!

➤ **Partnership FCA/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services –Todd Bragg -**

- Our agency is also very concerned about the restrictions on funding, getting state referrals, and such.
- Linda Lawson, long time center director, has retired on September 28th. She still will be connected with the agency due to her cultural expertise.
- New part-time program coordinator, Diantha Sprouse will handle just the administrative portion of the interpreting program.
- The agency has lost its United Way funding
- Many large Fortune 500 companies are in Chattanooga so there are many opportunities for those within the Deaf Community to be employed and, thus, generate revenue for the agency from the provision of interpreting services.

➤ **Bridges – Nikki Ringenberg-**

- Sallie Hussey was called into a meeting and I’ll be filling in for her today.
- Bridges was awarded the Memorial Foundation Award at the Center for Nonprofit Salute to Excellence. This award is given to agency that has risen above substantial fiscal problems and demonstrates sound management strategy in crisis. With this trophy came \$10,000 award.
- The current building and property of Bridges is almost sold. Another building/property has been sought out but will need some renovation prior to moving in. Details will be forth coming.

- Future events include a spaghetti fundraiser, community caroling, and other events to be announced.
 - Kate Kanies asked about the financial strength of Bridges since the major change in the contract. Eric Workman stated that the loss of the Vocational Rehabilitation money, as far as interpreting services go, really hasn't affected Bridges at all. They do a lot of fundraising throughout the year to prepare for events like this.
- **Knoxville Center of the Deaf – Terry Osborne -**
 - Not in attendance.
- **DeafConnect of the Mid-South – Teresa Wilson (Randy Chappell reports)**
 - Memphis is very concerned about Jackson's financial strength to provide services to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Communities.
 - The last three months we have done some work with the fire department and the fire museum downtown on Second and Main. This was mentioned in the press; television.
 - Art Connect II took place last week where various pieces from Deaf Artists were shown and made available for sale.
 - Marie Griffin came and presented a workshop on "Cognitive Processing".
 - In the process of developing a better relationship with the Optimist Club, the Hospitals, and Rotary Clubs.

Division of Rehabilitation Services Report

Cherrell Campbell-Street

- Because of the ambiguity I have come here hopefully to answer some of your questions regarding the future of the council. If I don't know the answer to your question, I will get back to you about it as soon as possible.
- I thank Thom Roberts for working really hard with me to come up with some strategies how we can keep things moving. I thank him so much for the help with that.
 - Randy Chappell – Is each center still being appropriated \$20,000.00?
 - Cherrell Campbell-Street – It's totally state appropriated with State funds which are not tied to the Vocational Rehabilitation program.
 - Dana Hughes – Who is responsible for the council funds being matched?
 - Cherrell Campbell-Street – We don't know where and when the mistake of matching the funds took place. We have met with the center directors to figure how they still can receive funding benefitting the VR program. The new "fee for service" contracts (started October 1, 2012) has a maximum liability of \$150,000/center. Some of the allowable services are: job readiness, vocational evaluations, and job placement services. For funding, since this is a unique situation, contacts the Commissioners from the departments represented at the council and ask them to come to a meeting to hear from you.
 - Kate Kanies – Speaking from the Hard of Hearing perspective, communication is important. How can they obtain assistance from VR?

- Cherrell Campbell-Street – They may feel more comfortable seeing a general caseload counselor but we also have those who understand and can work with those who are hard of hearing as well.
- Dana Hughes – Why can't the Department of Human Services admit that they made a mistake and take back everything?
- Cherrell Campbell-Street – Those individuals who made the mistake are long gone. Though this happened prior to my hire I take full responsibility so now it's on my shoulders. Taking the funding issue to the General Assembly, especially with the Legislators when they come back into session would be a good focus.
- Thom Roberts – TCDHH has been involved with the beginnings of the Tennesseans for Behavior Health Accessibility, Early Alerting and Resource Services, and the endorsement for Tennessee RID to create legislation to require interpreters to be licensed. We have not just been a group of consultants and information gathering. We've done much more than that since I've been in my position. Now, my scope of focus is limited to VR issues.

Committee Reports

- **Communication Committee**, Randy Chappell
 - Since Interpreter Licenses would need to be affiliated with the Council, this issue will have to be tabled until the future of the Council is known.
- **Education Committee**, Deborah Harris
 - Deaf Family Literacy in Memphis would like to share their information with the rest of the state to have it implemented across Tennessee. A "Barbara Bush" grant of \$70,000 has been awarded for this program to be operated under the auspices of the Memphis City Schools Foundation. Deaf Family Literacy employs members who are deaf as mentors who weekly visit families to teach parents and other family members to read to their children using American Sign Language. The program is successful.
 - Alan Mealka- At TSD, Michelle Swafford coordinates a similar program with funds from Laurent Clerc.
- **Legislative Committee**, Dana Hughes
 - I've set up a committee to gather various non-profit organizations (HLAA, TAD, TODB, and others). We've met three times. We discussed the need for better communication. The cut in funding to the centers has hurt the Deaf Community at large. We have plans to meet with Tennessee Legislators. TAD is taking the lead to teach the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind how to communicate with their legislators in a formal setting.
 - January 26th here in Nashville will be training on how to deal with legislators. All are welcomed to attend.
- **Social Welfare**, Kate Kanies
 - SERID Conference in Chattanooga was wonderful. I presented a workshop that I had done earlier with Karyn Menck at the National Hearing Loss Association of America Convention in June. It was bringing CART to Your Community. CART is a service that is helpful with many communication issues which our military veterans are facing as they come back from Afghanistan and Iraq.
 - Hear-Nashville is an organization that meets monthly and is led by the local SERTOMA Club. They are funded by the locally based Pickle

Foundation to provide assessment, hearing aids, and follow-up to the Audient and the Hear Now programs. Approximately 140 in the past year have reached out to us for assistance.

- TN Organization of the Deaf-Blind (TODB) is planning a 2014 Training Retreat. Our annual TODB picnic was recently held at Long Hunter State Park.

Deaf-Blind Program Specialist-Lana Newton

- Tennessee has received a federal grant for the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program for \$189,000. It is officially online and individuals can apply. The list of available equipment is incredible. One of the items is an iPad with a refreshable Braille keyboard.
- Noble Powers and Lori Wick and Lana Newton are volunteering and tutoring individuals in Braille and tactile sign language. The educational needs for deaf-blind children are great. Learning Braille will open up a world of opportunity for them.

Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing -Sandy Cohen

- LSDHH has a website where events and announcements can be placed by anyone who registers (free) online.

Old Business/New Business

- **Old:**
 - Lordy Smith's term has ended and replacing her will be Dr. Robert Baldwin from Memphis. We thank Lordy Smith for her many years of smiling service to the council. She will still be attending our meetings so we will still see her.
 - The future of the council is currently "unknown". Due to this, we will suspend the voting for chair and vice chair until our next meeting should we are able to continue. This was the motion by Randy Chappell, Seconded by Deborah Harris, and unanimously approved by the council.
- **New:**
 - Council meetings for 2013
 - February 22 – breakfast by TAD
 - May 17 – breakfast by HLAA
 - August 23 – breakfast by TN-RID
 - November 15 – breakfast to be decided

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned by Chairperson, Lordy Smith at 12:10 P.M.